

Good morning to the members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee. I am Dennis Oparowski of Lebanon, Connecticut. I am here today to discuss certain sections of Bill 6387. I am the proud owner of a 34 year old Grumman Cheetah four place single engine airplane. Prior to owning this airplane I dreamed for the past 40 years or so of owning a personal airplane. I have worked in aviation of some kind almost my entire adult life. In my younger years I have worked two jobs just so I can fly, saving, and sticking to a budget in order to purchase an airplane later in my adult life.

Most people that own airplane of my size are older..., make an average wage..., and are not in the fortune 500 club. It is hard to imagine that this proposed tax, after being repealed in 1992 and having gone to a yearly registration of \$90.00 has resurfaced. Prior to 1992 airplanes were subject to a personal property tax as recommended in this bill and it nearly wiped out the population of airplanes residing in Connecticut. A great majority of owners... and believe me when I say this will simply move their airplane out of State just like before and make our airports look like ghost-towns. I suspect if this portion of this bill is enacted we will return to that scenario. You see most owners do not live very close to the airport they fly from. They drive a half hour or so to get there. So driving another fifteen minutes over the border is not a big deal. On the west, they will park in NY, to the North, MA, and to the East, obviously, RI. They will purchase their fuel there. They will have their maintenance done there, and these States are just waiting for this legislature to pass this bill. They are waiting with open arms to welcome the influx of new aircraft, to their State, to increase the maintenance dollars that every aircraft produces, and to watch you devastate the Connecticut Aviation Industry. I think right now they are printing up thank you cards. Some airplane owners will stay of course because they have no recourse, if they sell it will be to someone out of State and by the way the State will lose that sales tax revenue. Those that remain will have to endure higher costs just to make up the difference and that will be the straw that breaks the Camel's back.

Let's just take a moment to talk about the dollars since this is what it's all about. Getting more money into a system that is out of control, and letting the people that created this mess, manage the new monies coming in and trusting them (you this legislative body) to manage it wisely. I might as well go and buy a lottery ticket and hope I hit the big one because that's the odds of trust the people of Connecticut have in you, right now.

Let me ask you this. What part of this bill creates jobs? Not a one, which in my opinion should be at the top of your list. Every day you wake up, the first thing in the morning to the last thing at night should be... did I do anything today to create any jobs. If not, shame on you, all of you. This bill is a job destroyer in this economy. This bill will break the back of the Aviation Business in Connecticut. There was a reason why all of this was abandoned in 1992. It was killing that industry then and it's about to kill it again. Once again have you people have learned nothing from the past? We must just be doomed to repeat it.

Let's get to the money this State will lose if you had done your homework. When people move their aircraft and they will... a chain of events will occur. These are just a sample of the jobs lost that will be affected and money lost. I'm sure there is much more that will get caught in the avalanche to follow.

1. The fuel that is purchased will cease to exist rendering the money from the tax on that fuel non-existent.
2. Each year the average dollar spent for FAA mandated inspections will happen elsewhere. That is approximately \$2,000.00 to the local economy for every small plane. Then there are the repairs that happen during the year and the ongoing preventive maintenance. We will lose the jobs of the mechanics that work on these aircraft. I know for a fact in talking with the Connecticut people who supply the parts for repairs, some of these people will lose their jobs, and so on.
3. Instruction that happens for proficiency will happen elsewhere, therefore there will not be the need for as many instructors for hire, not like we have an over abundance of them to start with in the first place.
4. The fees that the State receives for parking our aircraft on a monthly basis will disappear and go to out of State Airports.
5. When a Connecticut resident purchases an aircraft that now, will not reside in Connecticut the State will not receive the sales tax revenue of that purchase. When I bought my airplane from a man in Arkansas the State received almost \$1,800.00 for the privilege of me landing in this great State and parking it here.
6. The business at my local airport that runs charters using three jets stationed there now has already made the decision that if this portion of the bill is passed, no buts about it, they will move their operation back to New Jersey. Pilots and crews that support these charters on a daily basis, and mechanics will lose their jobs.

I am so hugely disappointed in Senators Williams, and Looney and Representative Donovan for supporting this bill. You all have airports in your districts that cannot afford a bill like this. The Danielson, Windham, and Meriden Airports to name a few are barely hanging on as is. This bill will cost some of the people in your districts their livelihood, raise unemployment and push those jobs away from Connecticut. This proves once again that politics plays a bigger role than what is right for the people in your districts. I guarantee not one of you ventured out to those airports to talk with the people there, and to get the entire story of what this bill will do to the local economy in your areas. I know because I asked the people there and all I got was a bunch of heads shaking east and west. I guess once again the party is more important than the people.

You can say all you want that, this is a bill about the people of Connecticut. That it's about tightening our belts and coming up with more revenue. It's not; it's about taking the easy way out by finding more objects to tax. By the way you missed the lawnmower and snow blower in my garage. Maybe you can save those for the next session.

Now let's talk a little about the new buzz word of SHARED SACRIFICE. I'm sure there are a lot of boat (vessel) people here and I do not want to create any more enemies that I already have but how in the world did you people come up with the comparisons for revenue between the two. I have a 34 year old airplane that is 22 feet long, seats four people if you adjust the fuel and baggage load. The 70% of the assessed value is around \$20,000. That puts me in the \$400.00 a year pp tax. Now I would have to go out and buy a boat that is 55 feet long and I don't care how old that thing is, is worth more than my airplane and seats more than four regardless of fuel and baggage.

So in retrospect, apples to apples, a brand new 23 foot boat will pay only \$75.00 a year, but my 34 year old 23 foot long airplane will have to pay \$400.00 a year. Who is the rocket scientist that did the figuring on this one? No wonder we're in trouble. I am not telling to up the ante on the boats, I am simply trying to express that no consideration and thought really went into this, just a try for a quick fix, which doesn't work in real life so why would you think it would work here.

But if you insist on killing an industry let's kill an industry. Seventy percent of the assessed value the same as what is proposed for airplanes and let's have some SHARED SACRIFICED. The same with everything else in this bill, 70% assessed value and let's kill them all in this economy. I've got to believe this legislature just has more friends with boats than airplanes.

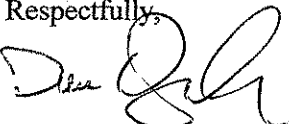
As well intentioned as this bill might have started to bring new revenues to the State, it will have a negative gain when all the dust settles in a year or so. You will then go scratching your heads again wondering why we have lost many jobs and the revenue it once created. Unfortunately any new taxes proposed at this time will only bring a temporary plus in revenue to the State. It will then drop like a rock in water later. The way out of this mess is jobs. A job lets people purchase products. When that happens the State receives monies from the sales tax. The State also receives monies from more people paying income tax. Jobs are the key, which is what you should be creating, not new taxes. Get away from the quick fix thinking, roll up your sleeves and get to work on what the people of Connecticut sent you here for. Or in my opinion, go home. You can't lead from the back of the bus, and don't mistake what you are doing now as leading.

As well intentioned as this bill might have been to raise revenue, it will not. In the not so long run it will cost taxpayers more money and then you will try again will some other tax scheme. Maybe that's where my lawnmower and snow blower comes in.

On a personal note, one of my goals and reason for purchasing an airplane as I retire from the military in a couple of years, was to give back and help fly cancer patients and veterans to and from appointments that is so hard for them to make by car due to the traveling distances. Pilots volunteer their time, money and airplanes, we receive no compensation for this and there are several organizations that coordinate this service and then we fly the missions. So again on a personal note which may mean nothing to you at all but means a great deal to me...every dollar you take away in aviation taxes, means the less I and others can give back.

Thank you for letting me express my concerns to this committee and I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,



Dennis Oparowski
Lebanon, CT.